

## CURRENT COMMENT

### GEO. J. ROSKRUGE PASSES AWAY

The death of George J. Roskruge at his home in Tucson, Arizona, on July 27, 1928, brought to the pioneer residents of the state keen sorrow. Mr. Roskruge had been a resident of Tucson for fifty-four years at the time of his death. During all his life in Arizona he was active in every effort put forth for the betterment of the social and industrial conditions in Arizona. He was a civil engineer, and in that capacity rendered distinguished service to Arizona. He was a pioneer leader in the organization of the first Masonic lodge in Arizona, and was prominent in the work of establishing the grand lodge and maintaining this order up to the time of his death, having been secretary of all the state Masonic organizations for many years.

The following account of the death of Mr. Roskruge appeared in the ARIZONA STAR at Tucson on July 28, 1928:

"George J. Roskruge, 83, pioneer champion rifle shot of the southwest, civil engineer of commanding ability, and the father of Masonry in Arizona, died at his home in Tucson yesterday morning following an illness of some duration.

"Mr. Roskruge was a pioneer resident of the state, having come to Arizona in 1872. In his passing, Masonry in Arizona lost a man who had served as secretary of the Grand Lodge of the state for forty-six years and who held more Masonic offices than any other in the state.

"Mr. Roskruge held the distinction of being the oldest grand secretary in length of service of any Grand Masonic body in the United States. He served in that capacity since 1883, when the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Arizona was founded, with the exception of the years 1888 and 1889, during which time he served as deputy-grand master and state grand master. During all of that time, however, he continued to perform the secretarial duties of the grand lodge.

#### Charter Shrine Member

"He was also a charter member of El Zaribah Temple, Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, and took a prominent part in all Shrine activities as well as in Masonic rites and functions.

"During his long service to Masonry in Arizona, Mr. Roskruge served successfully as grand recorder of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons; grand recorder of the Grand Com-

mandery, Knights Templar of Arizona; grand recorder of the Grand Council of Royal and Selected Masters of Arizona; grand master of the Grand Lodge, F. and A. M.; past grand high priest of the Grand Chapter of R. A. M.; grand commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar; grand illustrious master of Grand Council, R. and S. M.; master of Tucson Lodge No. 4, F. and A. M. Mr. Roskruge also was a 33rd degree member of the Ancient and Accepted Order of the Scottish Rite.

"Mr. Roskruge was born in Roskruge, Cornwall, England, April 10, 1845. He was a truly self-made man and began his business career at the early age of fifteen as a messenger boy in a law office in his native town. On April 12, 1860, he entered the Seventh Company of the Duke of Cornwall's Rifle Volunteers and served ten years, during which he came into prominence as a remarkably accurate rifle shot. He won many company and regimental prizes and for two years prior to his resignation from the volunteers he wore the three stars which marked him as the champion rifle shot of his company. Mr. Roskruge maintained his skill through his many active years and rifle matches formed one of the important interests of his life. He served as secretary in Arizona for the National Rifle Association and as secretary and treasurer of the State Rifle Association. He served also as president of the Pacific Coast Rifle League in 1914, and as secretary-treasurer of the Tucson Rifle Club.

#### **Came to U. S. in 1870**

"In 1870 Mr. Roskruge left his native land and settled in Denver, Colorado, the same year. He was employed there for two years and then, with sixteen others, came to Arizona in 1872 and settled first at Prescott. During 1874 he was in the field with United States Deputy Surveyor C. B. Foster and later prepared the maps and field notes for transmission to the surveyor general. He served until 1880, when he resigned the office, having been appointed United States deputy land and mineral surveyor. Later he served for four years as county surveyor of Pima County; for three years as city engineer of Tucson, and on July 1, 1893, was appointed chief clerk in the United States surveyor general's office. In 1896 he was appointed United States surveyor general by President Cleveland and held that office until 1897, when he was elected president of the Association of Civil Engineers of Arizona. He was also identified with the American Society of Irrigation Engineers.

"In May, 1896, Mr. Roskruge was united in marriage to Miss Lena Wood, a native of California, who was reared and educated in that state.



GEORGE J. ROSKRUGE

"He served as president and member of the board of education in Tucson at intervals from 1881 to 1914, and was otherwise identified in an important way with municipal affairs.

"In recognition of his outstanding record of service, the Arizona Grand Lodge will be convened and will be in charge of funeral services for Mr. Roskruge, to be held in Tucson at 4 o'clock Monday afternoon. Prominent Masons and Shriners from every section of the state are expected to attend the services.

"Mr. Roskruge is survived by four nephews, George, Will and Stanley Kitt of Tucson, and Kendall Kitt of Los Angeles, and a niece, Mrs. Culin of Los Angeles."

### Flags on Casket

"TUCSON, ARIZONA, JULY 27—(AP)—"

"The Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack will be placed on the casket of George J. Roskruge, pioneer of Arizona and father of Masonry in the state, at funeral services which will be conducted at 4 o'clock Monday afternoon in the Masonic Temple in Tucson. The placing of the flags was his request, made the last time he entered the temple.

"The eminent Mason died at 10:30 o'clock this morning following an illness of several months.

"The grand lodge will convene in the Masonic Temple at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon, preceding the hour of the funeral services.

"Mr. Roskruge was the organizer of the first Masonic lodge in Arizona—Tucson Lodge No. 1—was one of the organizers of the Lodge of Perfection, and secured for Arizona the Rose Croix. He was grand secretary of all Masonic bodies of the state at the time of his death."

Following is the story of an early day experience of George J. Roskruge, soon after his arrival in Arizona in 1872, related by Roskruge to the Arizona State Historian:

In July, 1872, Roskruge was camped at Volunteer Springs, near the site of the present railroad station of Bellemont. Food was scarce and two members of the party went out after game. The first man had been gone for several days when the second man left. When he did not return, after a couple of days, the other four of the party, including Roskruge, started for Prescott, for almost no food was on hand. One man, a Scandinavian, apparently big and stout, had to be herded along, insisting that all he wanted was to lie down and die. The road was down Hell Canyon and Roskruge says his experience in that gorge

showed it well named. Practically no food was available except prairie dogs, and few of them. Roskruge finally managed to get to the Little Chino Valley, near where the first territorial capital was established and there Mrs. Banghardt gave him some bread and milk. The Scandinavian had been left behind, apparently played out. Very soon, however, he was seen coming, running at high speed. On arrival, he declared he had run nine miles without stopping and that he had narrowly escaped being run down by bands of Indians, saving his life only by superior speed. Roskruge then went to Prescott, where he asked General Crook for an escort of horses to go back and search for the two men who were left behind at Volunteer Springs. Crook warned him that the intervening country swarmed with hostile Indians and refused to send any soldiers, but provided four horses, without equipment. Roskruge found three other men to go with him and scraped up apologies for saddles and bridles and made the journey back, finding the two men. Injury was the reason why the first man had not returned to camp and the second man had stayed with him. On the return trip there was a brush with the Indians in the Verde Valley.

For a while Roskruge had a hard time in Prescott, often lacking a meal, then he secured employment on the survey of the Fifth Standard Parallel North, through to the Colorado River. This was the first survey work ever done by Roskruge, who afterwards became a civil engineer, an assistant in the office of the surveyor general in Tucson, under Wasson, and still later Surveyor General of Arizona. In Tucson, he lived for a while in the house of Governor A. P. K. Safford.

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### DEATH OF HON. CHAS. R. DRAKE

On the Sixteenth day of June, 1928, Hon. Chas. R. Drake, former pioneer resident of Arizona, and one who was active in the development of the business and industrial life of the territory, died at his home in Long Beach. At the time of his death, Mr. Drake was nearing his 85th birthday. He came to Arizona in 1871 as hospital steward in the army, having been assigned to duty at Ft. Lowell, near Tucson, Arizona. He retired from this service in 1875 when he was appointed assistant postmaster at Tucson. Later in the same year he was appointed assistant depository, which office had charge of government funds to pay for all military and Indian supplies in the then territory. This service he continued until 1881, when he was

elected recorder for Pima County, in which office he served for two two-year terms. In 1889 he was appointed receiver of the U. S. Land Office in Tucson by President Harrison. During these years Mr. Drake had been instrumental in founding and building up a successful general insurance and real estate brokerage business, which he continued until he departed from Arizona to make his home in California. He was elected and served two terms in the upper house of the territorial legislature. In 1889 he was chosen as president of the territorial council, which met first at Prescott and later concluded the business of the session in Phoenix, the capital of the territory having been removed to Phoenix as a result of the first law passed by the Fifteenth Territorial Legislature. Mr. Drake had a correct vision of the future of Phoenix and the Salt River Valley and was a leader in the removal of the Arizona seat of government from Prescott to its present location.

Hon. Chas. R. Drake, was born at Walnut Prairie, Clark County, Illinois, July 22, 1843. He was the son of Charles Drake, a native of Richmond, Virginia, and Mahale Jane Jetter Drake, who was born in Louisville, Kentucky. On the paternal side, he was a direct descendent of Sir Francis Drake, one of the world's greatest explorers. He received a practical public school education and inaugurated his successful business career as a druggist clerk in the employ of William Matthew and Sons at St. Louis, Missouri.

### Joined Navy

When twenty years old, in 1863, Colonel Drake volunteered to serve in the United States Navy. He first served as acting master's mate and later as master's mate under Admiral Porter in the Mississippi Squadron.

His war experience included service in the famous Mosquito Fleet on the Red River, and he was on the scene of several of those historical Mississippi sieges in which the navy played a major role. At the close of the Civil War in 1865, he went to New York City, where he resumed his occupation as druggist clerk.

In 1871 Colonel Drake re-entered government service as hospital steward in the army and was assigned to duty in the Department of Arizona, stationed at Ft. Lowell, Tucson.

## PREHISTORIC IRRIGATION

At 4 o'clock in the morning, after an all night speech on the Colorado River, Senator Ashurst surprised the Senate with these words, "Before Rome was founded, or the wolf suckled Romulus and Remus, a civilized race had conquered the deserts of Arizona, had builded great communal homes and cultivated its lands."

Old indeed is the Southwest. Only forty-six years after Columbus came to the New World, Spanish adventurers began their work of exploration. Spanish families were founded at Santa Fe a score of years before the Mayflower brought colonists to Plymouth. Spanish padres found the ancient civilization and recorded a history of canals and cities whose antiquity no man knew.

Not until long years later, when the first land seekers came into the Valley of the Rio Salado, and found there a network of "sunken roads," was the discovery made of the vastest ancient irrigation system in North America. Canals and huge buildings were found on the Rio San Francisco, which the later comers re-named the Verde River. The valley settlers objected to being called "Saladoans" and so they translated the name into our atrocious and rightly ridiculed name, the Salt River Valley.

A larger rural population tilled the fields of this valley before the commencement of the Christian Era than farm its lands today. They were the Original Engineers, the true Pioneers; canals and clan-castles were here built, used, abandoned, forgotten, when London and Paris were yet clusters of wild huts.

The story of this race will begin in the next issue of the Arizona Historical Review, January, 1929, a history prepared by Dr. Omar A. Turney who has been gathering data about them for forty-odd years. His map of the ancient canals and an account of their magnitude was presented to the Royal Geographic Society of London, and at the request of Sir William Ramsay he was elected a Fellow of the Society.

These articles will run through the entire issues for the year 1929. The reader will see a race bringing from the far south the culture of a superior people and surrounded on all sides by barbarians; he will learn of the first puny canals on arroyos, of the gradual conquest of the river, and will discover the numerous differences between this people and the tribes which lived to the north and east and made the Black-on-white pottery.

There will be seen the necessity for the creation of an ancient culture district, to be known as the Lower Salt, and for naming its potteries the Red-on-buff. The strength of the race will appear, and the causes for their final defeat and enforced abandonment of a home which had been theirs for more years than the time that white man has now been in the New World. The irrigation works of all other peoples in North America will seem crude and trivial.

Then the irrigation works of South America will be reviewed and the differences in the engineering problems considered. Great as were their accomplishments in the building of hillside canals, which wound for miles around mountain sides, where the canal on one side was cut into the hill and on the other side supported by retaining walls, yet the total ground reclaimed was small as compared to the one hundred and seventy square miles of continuous fields cultivated in the Valley of the Salado.

Long before the siege of Troy, irrigation was practiced in the valley of the Nile, and in the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris. There the problems were simple, and the engineering crude; results can be measured more in terms of the acres reclaimed than by the difficulties overcome.

When the reader has seen the accomplishments of the people in the days of the building of the pyramids and of writing in cuneiform characters on clay tablets, the result will bring surprise, and an added respect and thrill of pride for the ancient engineers of our own Salt River Valley. We may again find occasion for boasting in this, the Land of the Stone Hoe.

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## ARIZONANS PICNIC IN CALIFORNIA

There exists in Southern California, with headquarters in Los Angeles, an organization of former residents of Arizona, known as the "Arizona Society of Southern California." This organization was formed more than twenty-five years ago and was originally named the "Arizona Hassayampa Society." Annually this society holds a picnic at some place in the vicinity of Los Angeles, and this year this annual Arizona picnic was held at Bixby Park, in Long Beach, on August 18. The attendance this year was the largest ever known and numbered no less than fifteen hundred who now reside in California, including many present residents of Arizona on vacation or business visits to points in Southern California.

Many former prominent Arizona citizens attended this annual picnic at Long Beach. On the speaker's platform were Geo. H. Kelly, the present Arizona State Historian, who attended as the official representative of Governor Geo. W. P. Hunt; Judge Hawkins, formerly of Prescott; Chas. T. Connell, a former pioneer of Arizona, and connected with the Indian service at San Carlos Agency in early days; W. H. Savage, who was a former resident of Cochise County, where in 1884 he was elected county attorney, defeating Marcus Aurelius Smith, who as the democratic candidate sought a re-election to that office. All these gentlemen spoke to the assembled Arizonans and the occasion was one thoroughly enjoyed by all.

For several hours previous to and after the formal program, old friends renewed acquaintances and related incidents of early days and experiences encountered during the days when civilization and industry was being planted and nurtured in Arizona.